

Herbert Scoville, Jr.

STAT

December 11, 1972

The Editor
Washington Star News
225 Virginia Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D. C. 20003

Dear Sir,

In order to set the record straight, I should like to correct a statement made by Oswald Johnston on December 4th in his article on Helms' exit from CIA. In this he stated that Helms' assessment of the Soviet SS-9 threat appears in retrospect to have been wrong. Actually, Helms' assessment has been confirmed. Since the summer of 1969, the Soviets only initiated construction on less than 38 SS-9 or other large ICBMs. No new starts have taken place in the last year and they are now limited to a total of 318 by the Interim Agreement signed in Moscow. This very small program is to be compared with Secretary Laird's estimate of an increase of 50 - 60 per year and a predicted total of 450 by 1974. Secretary Laird was wrong and CIA Director Helms was right.

Sincerely,

Herbert Scoville, Jr.
McLean, Virginia

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HS: ☐
cc: Mr. Carl Duckett